

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 05403 260830Z  
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----260831Z 051303 /10  
O 260542Z MAY 77 ZFF-4  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
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S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 5403

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY-EYES ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PK, US, MASS  
SUBJECT: A-7 SALES

REF: ISLAMABAD 5342

1. WE HAVE SENT YOU A MESSAGE WHICH CONSIDERS ISSUES OTHER THAN BHUTTO'S ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN WHICH AZIZ AHMED MIGHT RAISE IN PARIS. I REFERRED TO ARMS SALES AND NOTED IF THE SUBJECT IS DISCUSSED THE FOREIGN MINISTER MAY WELL ASK ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE A-7 SALE.

2. AMBASSADOR BYROADE SENT YOU AN EYES ONLY LETTER ON FEBRUARY 23 CONCERNING THE A-7'S AND NOTED THE PAKS HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THEIR REQUEST FOR THE PLANE WOULD BE APPROVED. AS AMBASSADOR BYROADE WROTE, DR. KISSINGER TOLD AZIZ AHMED IN PARIS IN DECEMBER 1975, THAT ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT GIVE AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER ON THE A-7 SALE, OUR RESPONSE "WOULD NOT BE NEGATIVE" AND WE HAD THE INTENTION OF APPROVING THE SALE. I WANTED TO BE CERTAIN YOU HAD THIS BACKGROUND IF THE ISSUE WERE RAISED IN PARIS.

3. OUR INITIAL READING OF THE NEW ARMS SALES POLICY INDICATES  
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THAT THE "NO FIRST INTRODUCTION" CLAUSE RELATING TO NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS COULD WELL PRECLUDE THE A-7 SALE TO PAKISTAN. THE A-7 HAS BEEN A LONG-STANDING ISSUE WHICH HAS CAUSED MISUNDERSTANDING AND SOME FRICTION BETWEEN THE US AND PAKISTAN. ALSO, IT HAS BECOME PERIPHERALLY ENTANGLED IN THE REPROCESSING ISSUE, SINCE CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO INCLUDING THE A-7 AS PART OF A REPROCESSING "PACKAGE" TO BE DISCUSSED WITH

THE PAKISTANIS.

4. IF THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF AN A-7 SALE UNDER OUR NEW POLICY-REGARDLESS OF HOW STRONG A MILITARY JUSTIFICATION THE GOP CAN MAKE; AND IF THERE IS ALSO NO POSSIBILITY OF THE A-7 BEING PART OF ANY REPROCESSING, NOW MAY BE THE BEST TIME TO LAY THIS ISSUE TO REST. IF BOTH THESE CONDITIONS APPLY, AND IF YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN TO AZIZ AHMED WHY AN A-7 SALE IS NOT POSSIBLE AND THINK IT EXPEDIENT TO DO SO IN PARIS, IT WILL REMOVE ONE IRRITANT FROM OUR RELATIONSHIP AT A TIME WHEN WE HAVE OTHER CONCERNS TO FOCUS ON. IT WILL ALSO BE ONE LESS PROBLEM AMBASSADOR HUMMEL WILL FACE ON HIS ARRIVAL.

5. I REALIZE A DECISION TO BREAK THIS NEWS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER MUST BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE TALKS AND YOUR OWN JUDGMENT WHETHER IT IS WISE TO RAISE THE ISSUE AT THIS TIME. IF YOU DO DECIDE TO CLOSE OUT THE A-7 OPTION, I THINK IT IMPORTANT THAT AT THE SAME TIME WE NOTE THAT OUR NEW ARMS SALES POLICY DOES NOT PRECLUDE THE SALE OF OTHER TYPE OF AIRCRAFT TO PAKISTAN. (I AM THINKING SPECIFICALLY OF THE F-5 WHICH WOULD BE POLITICALLY MORE JUSTIFIABLE, LESS OF A RED FLAG TO THE INDIANS AND IS OBVIOUSLY A DEFENSIVE AND LESS SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT COMPARED TO THE A-7.) ALTHOUGH PARIS WOULD NOT BE THE VENUE TO GET INTO DETAILED DISCUSSION WITH AZIZ AHMED ON THE QUESTION OF AIRCRAFT SALES, IF WE DO TURN OFF THE A-7 POSSIBILITY, I THINK IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO NOTE AT THE SAME TIME THAT OTHER LESS CONTROVERSIAL AIRCRAFT SALES ARE POSSIBLE. THIS WOULD SHOW THE PAKS THAT WE ARE  
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INTERESTED IN KEEPING AN ARMS SALES RELATIONSHIP, PROVIDED IT MEETS THE CRITERIA OF OUR NEW POLICY AND IS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

6. ALTHOUGH THE GOP WILL BE VERY UNHAPPY WITH AN UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT FROM US ON THE A-7, IT WILL AT LEAST BURY THE ISSUE ONCE AND FOR ALL. THE INITIAL PAKISTANI REACTION WILL PROBABLY BE ONE OF BITTERNESS; IT MAY WELL BE BENEFICIAL IN THE LONG-TERM HOWEVER, IN THAT IT WOULD EXORCISE THIS PROBLEM FROM OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009